

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached "Replacement Sheets" of drawings include(s) changes to Figure 2.

The attached "Replacement Sheets," which include Figures 1-9 replace the original sheets including Figures 1-9.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet(s)

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are now pending in the application. Claims 1, 2, 9 and 10 have been amended. Minor amendments have been made to the specification. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection(s) in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

DRAWINGS

Figure 2 has been amended to include reference numerals 32a and 32b that were added to the specification.

SPECIFICATION

The specification stands objected to for certain informalities.

Applicants note that the specification has been amended to provide additional description of features that are clearly shown in the drawings. Therefore, no new matter has been added. The additional description provides antecedent basis support for the amendments to the claims discussed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102 AND § 103

Claims 1-4, 6-7 and 9-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ueta (U.S. Pat. No. 5,951,021). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ueta (U.S. Pat. No. 5,951,021) in view of Yoshida, et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,938,208). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ueta (U.S. Pat. No. 5,951,021) in view of Incoing (U.S. Pat. No. 4,625,979). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

At the outset, Applicants note that independent claims 1 and 10 have each been amended to define "a protruding feature made from said first material and located between the fastener hole and the exterior perimeter and spaced from said seal bead, and rising from the first surface a second predetermined height that is about equal to or greater than the first predetermined height, said protruding feature having first and second terminating end portions so as not to circumscribe said fastener hole."

Applicants note that the previous language "seal feature" has been changed to protruding feature both in the claims and specification since the protruding feature does not perform any sealing function. Applicants submit that the prior art relied upon by the Examiner fails to teach or suggest a protruding feature that is spaced from a seal bead and which has first and second terminating end portions so as not to circumscribe the fastener hole, as claimed. Applicants note that the gasket of Ueta '021 is of the type wherein the bolt holes 14 are required to be sealingly isolated from the coolant water holes 16 and oil holes 15 as shown in Figure 1 so the rubber beads 24 completely circumscribe the bolt holes 14 in order to isolate the bolt holes 14 from the cooling fluid that flows through the cooling passages 16.

Applicant submits that neither Ueta '021 or any of the other cited references teach nor suggest a protruding feature that is spaced from the seal bead and that has first and second terminating end portions so as not to circumscribe a fastener hole, as claimed. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of

the rejections of claims 1-10 which Applicants respectfully submit are now in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (734) 354-5445.

Respectfully submitted,

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